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Daily Highlights

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T U E S D A Y H I G H L I G H T S

- * Security Council condemns in strongest terms violence in Burundi; demands all concerned refrain from inciting violence or destabilizing Government.
- * Secretary-General asks General Assembly to extend MINUGUA mandate until 31 December; says repeated and serious human rights violations continue in Guatemala.
- * Secretary-General in Mexico talks on Security Council reform; says countries will not accept wealthiest and most powerful States dealing with global issues behind closed doors.
- * Renewed General Assembly session requested by Cuba will meet tomorrow.
- * United States will ask Congress to approve 5-year plan for paying UN arrears; wants to reduce share of regular budget from 25 to 20 per cent.
- * Less than 20,000 ethnic Serbs remain in Sarajevo out of pre-Dayton population of up to 60,000.
- * Secretary-General's acting Special Representative in Western Sahara tries to break stalemate in identification process.
- * Secretary-General appoints new Special Representative for Haiti.

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The Security Council today condemned in the strongest terms, violent acts against civilians, refugees and humanitarian personnel and the assassination of Government officials in Burundi. It demanded that all concerned refrain from violence or incitement to violence and from seeking to destabilize security or depose the Government by force or other unconstitutional means. In unanimously adopting resolution 1049 (1996), the Council called on all concerned to engage

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in urgent, serious, negotiations and mutual accommodation, within the framework of the National Debate agreed to at the Convention of Government on 10 September 1994, and to increase efforts towards national reconciliation.

The Council also called on all parties to cooperate fully with the Commission of Inquiry and reminded the Government of its responsibility for the security and protection of Commission members and personnel. It asked the Secretary-General to continue consultations with the Government and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) Observer Mission in Burundi to ensure adequate security for the Commission and asked Member States to provide adequate financing for it.

The Council asked the Secretary-General to report on the possibility of establishing, through voluntary contributions, a United Nations radio station in Burundi to promote national reconciliation and dialogue. It reiterated its invitation to Member States to cooperate in identifying and dismantling radio stations which incited hatred and violence.

Member States and regional and international non-governmental organizations were invited to be ready to provide assistance to support progress by the parties towards national dialogue. They were also invited to cooperate with Government initiatives for comprehensive rehabilitation in military and police reforms, judicial assistance, development programmes and support at international financial institutions. The Council encouraged the OAU to increase the size of its observer mission and stressed the need for military observers to operate in any part of the country without restrictions.

The Secretary-General was asked in consultation with the Government, Heads of State of the Great Lakes Region in Africa, other concerned countries, the OAU and the European Union to intensify preparations for a regional Conference for Peace, Security and Development in the Great Lakes region of Africa, which would also address the issues of political and economic stability. He was also encouraged to continue consultations with Member States and the OAU on contingency planning to support a comprehensive dialogue and for a rapid humanitarian response if there was widespread violence or a serious deterioration in the humanitarian situation.

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Serious and repeated human rights violations continued to occur in Guatemala and had gone unpunished, according to the Secretary-General. Most violations were due to actions by State agents or groups connected to it, or the failure of the State to ensure the safety of citizens. However, the violations did not appear to be the result of Government policy. In the context of armed conflict, serious human rights violations and failure to prevent civilian suffering had also occurred owing to actions by the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG).

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The Secretary-General's comments were contained in report to the General Assembly, dated 16 February, on the United Nations Mission for the Verification of Human Rights and of Compliance with the Commitments of the Comprehensive Agreement on Human Rights in Guatemala (MINUGUA). In recommending MINUGUA's mandate be renewed until 31 December, he said it was critical for the Government and the leadership of the URNG to carry out MINUGUA's recommendations, which had too often been ignored.

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Security Council reform could be at the heart of a United Nations transformed into a truly effective system for the maintenance of international peace and security, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali said yesterday, during a lecture at the Mexican Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The four basic reform issues were an increase in the permanent membership, an increase in non-permanent membership only, the number of affirmative votes needed for the Council to act and enhancing its working methods.

The Secretary-General said reform of the Council would create ideas, foster communications, improve coordination and gain wider acceptance for United Nations decisions. The immensely difficult tasks which lay ahead of the Organization would require a wider and deeper foundation for common action. Such improvements would in turn further the democratization of the international system. States realized that issues once considered internal and subject to their policy decisions alone, were now affected by the forces of globalization. They would not and could not accept a situation in which global issues were dealt with by representatives of only a few of the wealthiest and most powerful countries, acting behind closed doors.

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The General Assembly will hold a resumed session tomorrow at the request of Cuba, according to a United Nations Spokesman. To date, the Foreign Minister of Cuba is the only representative scheduled to address the session, she said.

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The United States Government will ask Congress to approve a five-year plan for paying its arrears to the United Nations, the Country's Permanent Representative, Madeleine Albright said yesterday. It would also ask Members to reduce from 25 to 20 per cent, the U.S. share of the UN's regular budget, which would have the effect of reducing its peace-keeping rate to 25 per cent. In an address to the Women's Fund of North Carolina, Ambassador Albright said her Government expected Congress to insist the funds would actually be paid as the United Nations reformed, kept its budget down and cut unnecessary staff. While it was possible some in Congress would never support funding for the UN, the majority would like to see the country pay what it owes, she added.

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A United Nations spokesman said Ambassador Albright's comments on why the UN was so important to America were very good and should be required reading. Noting proposals by the Russian Federation to pay off its approximately \$500 million debt over a certain period of time, she said the UN was very happy that there would be movement in the area of finances. However, the five-year period seemed very far away to an Organization that was facing total bankruptcy at the end of the year.

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Less than 20,000 ethnic Serbs remained in Sarajevo out of the 50,000 to 60,000 who lived in the capital before the Dayton peace accords, a United Nations spokesman said today. Every day, more public and private buildings were being torched and the United Nations was particularly worried about the situation in Grbavica.

The situation appeared to have stabilized in the suburbs of Vogosca and Ilijas, where Bosnian Federation police, accompanied by United Nations civilian police monitors, began patrolling in late February, the spokesman said. However, only about 700 people in Vogosca had registered with the United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees (UNHCR) indicating they wanted to stay. Many of those might leave and others, intending to stay, might be too afraid to register. The suburb of Hadizi, which would come under the control of Bosnian Federation police on Wednesday, was also emptying out and only 120 Serbs had registered with the UNHCR.

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The identification process in the Western Sahara had not resumed, and so far, only some 60,000 people had been identified, a United Nations spokesman said today. However, the Secretary-General's acting Special Representative, Erik Jensen, had been in touch with the parties in an effort to break the current stalemate. Without their cooperation it would be very difficult for the United Nations to resume the identification process.

At the end of January, the Security Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Mission in Western Sahara (MINURSO) for only four months until 31 May. The Spokesman said the Council had made it very clear that unless there was meaningful progress to complete the identification plan, the Secretary-General would have to submit a detailed plan for a phased withdrawal of the United Nations operation.

Meanwhile, Major Jose Leandro of Portugal will take up his appointment as new Force Commander of MINURSO on 1 April.

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The Secretary-General today appointed Enrique ter Horst of Venezuela as his New Special Representative for Haiti to replace Lakhdar Brahimi of Algeria. Prior to his appointment, Mr. ter Horst served as Special Representative for El Salvador and was Chief of the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL).

A new Force Commander in Haiti was also appointed today. Brigadier General Pierre Daigle of Canada will assume command of the Military component of the United Nations Mission in Haiti (UNMIH). Previously, he served as the Canadian Contingent Commander for the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in the former Yugoslavia. Colonel Philippe Balladur of France has been appointed as the new Police Commissioner of the Civilian Police component for UNMIH.

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